THE INQUIRER

ORGAN OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY
AND FREE RELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP

ESTABLISHED IN 1842 REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER

No. 6033 Saturday, February 22, 1958 Price 3½d.

THE AUTHENTIC QUEST

THE Central Postal Mission, which has existed for many years, with the declared object of spreading "a knowledge of Unitarian faith, principles and thought by correspondence and distribution of literature", is to be absorbed in the new Publicity Department of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. Before the Mission is dissolved the quiet and excellent work it has done should be noted. It is one of those independent bodies created by enthusiastic Unitarians for doing a job not officially undertaken. It was mostly staffed by enthusiastic women, and it is a tribute to their enthusiasm that a good number of Unitarian chapels and churches have one or two members connected with them first introduced by the Postal Mission. This is the second of such independent bodies (the other is the Union For Social Service) to be made a department of the Assembly, and care will have to be taken to see that too much centralization, or even the need for it, does not blunt the energy, or mark the decline of independent self-acting bodies.

The Inquirers

The Central Postal Mission recently inserted a small two-line advertisement in a "class" Sunday paper offering information on Unitarian beliefs. It has received a welcome number of replies, far exceeding inquiries from any other source.

This as compared with other known results, suggests that it is people of developed interests who are likely to respond to Unitarian invitations of this kind. Those who take the trouble to write have probably already done some serious thinking about religion, and the word Unitarian is unlikely to be strange to them.

It is improbable whether many of the inquiries ask for information about "peace" or "social action". The information required is more directly religious and theological. This is important.

The passion for new social action most certainly has to come as a light for those who sit in darkness. This is true. The churches should be creative in new and passionate ways upon such action, and the test of their interior life will frequently come from the power they show towards triumphant social life. This is true. One of the deadliest weights upon official religion at the moment is that it seems to have nothing more to say upon peace, for instance, than the best-intentioned politician. But this is not the ultimate concern of inquirers from a religious body.

For most people have personal lives to live, and the great general questions of the time, important as they are, do not impinge upon personal problems. The answers given in the past by organized religion to the authentic quest of a person to know where he stands in this world with his own personal spiritual difficulties, no longer satisfy. Large numbers of people are still passionately concerned about the existence of God: it is a personal problem for them; it has to be settled; for one reason or another it is not settled by orthodox religion and, consequently, they are seeking for help elsewhere. Indeed, large numbers of people have, through their own efforts, come to certain conclusions for themselves; they are surprised to find that other people share them; and they hope to meet other people. The impact of a religious body upon the public outside itself is likely to be primarily religious and theological rather than social. Social problems on the whole can be dealt with in any congenial atmosphere. It is, after all, only in a specifically concerned religious body that personal religious problems can be contemplated and discussed.

An Important Task

The Unitarian churches, therefore, have a clear task to perform. It is to try and come to conclusions about the depths of the personal life in relation to all that men mean by religion. This means facing courageously problems of morality, of man's frequent isolation in this world when he possesses no religious answer to the meaning of his own existence, and, above all, the conflict a man frequently endures between himself and what he calls his better self. And all this sooner or later has to be expressed in terms of theology. If men are concerned about the existence of God it means nine times out of ten that they are concerned with the ideas which either confirm or deny his existence. These ideas in a Christian community are generally well known in a Christian way. Their traditional representation no longer answers the intellectual needs of many people. The familiar ideas of the Trinity, or the Divinity of Christ, and many of the theological beliefs that rest upon these, no longer express what men believe about God, or hope to believe. Someone has to do the work of saying truly, in convincing ideas, what the nature of God is. To suppose that this is too big a task for anyone, that it is too presumptuous a task is, in effect, to deny the right of a religious body to exist. Its whole existence, when it is based upon a Theistic belief, is to try and explain and express the nature of God. That is why people make inquiries.

All this, of course, does not brush aside the great general social questions, or action upon them. These arise naturally from a religious concern, and nine times out of ten will be an indication of its vitality.

THE CASE OF THE DISAPPEARING EGO

By Ford Lewis

(Dr. Ford Lewis is now Associate Minister of the First Unitarian Church, Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.)

IT is a familiar medical maxim that the best state of health is one in which the individual is hardly conscious of his body at all. It functions so perfectly that he is scarcely aware of its processes. It is only when the clock stops running that we hear it, only when the body begins to function poorly that we pay much attention to it. The same principle applies to mental health. The ideal state would be one approaching complete non-self-consciousness. Conversely, the worst condition would be one in which the mind constantly turned in upon itself, in which the individual never gained a moment's respite from compulsive self-analysis.

The kind of spiritual health for which we are searching is when our little selves are swallowed up in some greater Self, our separate lives are assumed in the common life, our individual awareness becomes identified with a larger awareness, and we are not lost but found. Becoming a conscious part of a larger whole, we become, by means of an infinitely rich paradox, more intensely ourselves than ever before. The exiled spirit comes home, comes into its own heritage through the unexpected grace of self-forgetfulness.

Such a path also leads to the truest consciousness of God. God becomes more real to us the less clearly we see him as an objective reality. Christendom has commonly assumed that the more devoutly we search for God, to behold the holy vision, the more we fear him and the more we serve him, the clearer our knowledge of him will be. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him", an unknown Psalmist tells us and "His secret is with the righteous", a proverb adds. But in spite of this insistence that God reveals himself to the faithful, a sturdy thread of doubt is woven through much of the Bible. Was it the same Psalmist in a mood of greater candour or another writer altogether who wrote, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known"?

In the Biblical narrative of the Exodus, it is written that "God used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend", but the idea of personal confrontation of God and man is rare in Biblical literature, and is reserved to very special persons on very special occasions. Thomas Aquinas, writing on the dangers of a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, uses this text as a warning. "When Scripture states that He spoke to Him face to face, this is to be understood as expressing the opinion of the people, who thought that Moses was speaking with God, mouth to mouth". Actually, the writer himself modifies his opinion as to the visibility of God somewhat a few verses later when Moses says to God, "I pray thee, show me thy glory". God prepares to grant the request and tells Moses, ". . . . you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen".

Growth of the God Idea

Thus, while there is a keen consciousness of the actuality of God throughout the Old and New Testaments, Biblical writers tended to cautious when it came to the details of his appearance. But how did men get a God concept in their minds in the first place? When in the early dawn of human consciousness was the divine image added to man's mental furnishings, and why? Erich Fromm makes a convincing case that the basis for all love, including love of God in its many forms, is "the experience of separateness and the resulting need to overcome the anxiety of separateness by the experience of union".

Evolution seems to consist, for us, in a slow, steady emergence from nature, from the arranged and rooted security of blind instinct to a premeditated, personally-planned existence. More strictly speaking, this involves the emergence of consciousness and conscience. These elements, in turn, have historically upset man's original unity with nature since they have made him a cogitating, self-conscious being. At this point man lost his primordial, non-conscious unity and developed a dual nature. He became part animal and part ungovernable ox. This early stage of religious development was characterized by efforts to go back, to re-establish his primary bonds with his environment.

This is the stage of animism and totemism. Man looks to his early nature for security. In the face of famine, sickness, weather and war, he is unsure of himself. He envies animal cunning, covets brute strength. To him, these traits represent an animal security for which he longs, and he objectifies this longing by making a god of the creature which in the experience of the tribe symbolizes craft and cunning—the hawk and snake in Egypt, the monkey in India, the coyote in North America.

Later, man becomes a shepherd, a farmer and a craftsman. He learns to rely increasingly on his own power, is less and less at the mercy of his environment. Now he is more content with his human traits and less desirous of reverting to his natural state. He makes images of his gods and worships them. The idols he fashions begin to look remarkably like himself. He becomes conscious, not just of his own separate existence, but of his ability to transform nature and shape it to his ends. Indirectly, he begins to reverence himself in the products which he creates with his hands. As he enlarges his possessions and adds to his accomplishments, he becomes worthier in his own sight, and his gods increase in stature correspondingly.

God as Father Figure

It is safe to say that to most people God embodies the best attributes of a man, infinitely magnified. These are the garments with which he has characteristically been clothed in the past. Periodically, this notion goes to seed and produces such a poverty-stricken phrase as "The Man Upstairs", but anthropomorphic speculation has usually been worthier than that. There is a strong appeal, for instance, in the figure of God as a Cosmic Father embodying a judicious combination of justice and mercy, wisdom and love, truth and power. This is the picture we get from the thinking of Jesus. Fatherly love, by its nature, involves certain demands, certain laws and certain principles which require knowledge and obedience on the part of man.

Just as theology has progressed from animism to anthropomorphism, and in some cases through anthropomorphism there has been change also. It is a cruel and vindictive God in the Judeo-Christian tradition who drives man from paradise, drowns most of his creation in the flood and sends more people to hell than he takes into heaven. He drowns the entire army of Egypt for the Pharaoh's stubbornness, having first seen to it personally that the Pharaoh's heart was hardened beyond relenting. It is much later that the ideal of a loving God who desires universal brotherhood develops.

Our personal theology is greatly influenced by our individual psychology. A person's theology is as good an indication as any of the extent to which he has grown up. We begin life with the closest possible identification with our mother. As we grow more self-sufficient, the importance of the father becomes greater. Our world expands, and our need is for organization and system to enable us to cope with it. Most persons do not progress beyond this stage in religion, the stage in which God is conceived as a father who reassures them when they are "good", punishes them when they are "bad" and, if properly approached, rescues them and their friends when they are in trouble.

The Next Step

As man becomes increasingly master of his environment and at home in his world, God partakes increasingly of the character of benevolence. The struggle becomes less fierce. Man begins to learn the meaning of his conscious existence. He acquires security by learning to accept its opposite. He achieves security in the midst of insecurity, "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation" by coming to insist upon it. Gradually, God comes to mean order and man

of spirit. At last, to his surprise and intense satisfaction, duality is transcended and God ceases to exist as an objective phenomenon. He merges with the landscape of the spirit. He becomes part of the serene and substantial whole.

Man now gains a clear view of his own true nature. He has deified animals, worshipped totems and images, felt reverence and paid homage through many symbols to a spirit which has forever intrigued, haunted and baffled him. Now he stands before the central shrine and the whole human panorama comes into focus. He has become that which he has worshipped afar off. He no longer sees God, knows God or loves God. He *lives* God, *experiences* truth, *participates* in divinity, *enacts* love and justice, *becomes* beauty and peace.

He no longer has any need for a theology, which is knowledge about God. He knows, with Meister Eckhart, that "If . . . I am changed into God and He makes me one with Himself, then, by the living God, there is no distinction between us. . . . Some people imagine that they are going to see God, that they are going to see God as if he were standing yonder, and they here, but it is not to be so. God and I: we are one. By knowing God I take him to myself. By loving God, I penetrate him".

COMMENT

Burns Centenary

I NOTICE that Unitarian speakers are getting in early with the Burns Centenary. It is right that they should do so, for although Burns never called himself a Unitarian, his sympathies were with the liberal side in what was called the "New Light Controversy", which, towards the end of the 18th Century, convulsed the church in Scotland. In 1786 Dr. W. McGill, minister at Ayr (near which Burns was born), published *A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ*, which in the eyes of the orthodox seems to ascribe to the Atonement a purely subjective significance. "The direct and immediate end of His mission", wrote McGill, "was to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, or reveal the Will of God; to confirm His doctrine by proper evidences; to set an example of what He taught; and, in short, to promote the salvation of sinners in the most effectual manner . . . though it should cost Him His life". All through the work there seemed to run a thread of contention that the vicariousness of Christ's sufferings was on a par with the vicariousness of human sufferings. These views were condemned by the Presbytery; and McGill himself recanted; but the controversy was immortalised in some of the poems of Robert Burns, notably *The Kirk's Alarm: A Satire*, in which he urged that McGill should stretch upon a rack, since

> "To join faith and sense,
> Upon any pretence,
> Is heretic damnable error."

About this time several Unitarian congregations sprang up in Scotland; but there, as elsewhere, the reaction against the French Revolution was fatal to a wide acceptance of liberal views of any kind, so that most of these congregations disappeared.

Colour Bar in Reverse

I have been reading the latest biography of David Livingstone, and have been interested in his attitude to the difference in colour between himself and the negroes with whom he came in contact. He was very sensitive in exposing his body to the gaze of the natives, and explained his attitude by saying, "One finds admiration of the white skin; it seems unnatural, like blanched celery—or white mice"; and the author of the biography, G. Seaver, says that once he asked a trusted and intelligent native to tell him quite frankly how the white man appeared in their eyes, or of what they most reminded him.

The answer, embarrassing although not unexpected, was: "You seem to us, Bwana, to resemble peeled bananas". A grandson of Livingstone's half a century later met an old man who had seen the great explorer. His most vivid memory of him was when, with another ten-year-old boy, he crept into the reeds to see whether Livingstone disappeared into the lake whence, it was believed, he had come. He didn't disappear, but he petrified the urchins by "taking something in his hand, dipping it into the water, and rubbing his head till his brains came out". It is interesting at times to learn just how we look from the point of view of different people!

Drinking Among Adolescents

The growth of drinking habits among teenagers in this district has given rise to discussion at the annual licensing sessions. There were 11 teenage convictions for drunkenness, of which two were of youths aged 17, whilst two boys of 16 and one of 15 were convicted of buying drink on licensed premises. These add up, of course, to a very small percentage of teenagers in the district, but they represent a rise of 300 per cent on the number of convictions four years ago.

Various causes were suggested—relaxed home discipline, plenty of money to spend, influence of television and leniency of penalties imposed by law, are all blamed: and no doubt all had their influence at different times. I feel, personally, that television is in this respect becoming a real menace, for it seems impossible to have plays without giving the suggestion that people living in a strata of society to which it seems good to belong, spend much of their leisure in drinking "something with a kick in it", which, no doubt, is responsible, among other things, for the fact that there are many who would consider no dance worth going to unless there is a bar. The influence of television in this respect ought to be fully investigated.

What Makes Politics Interesting?

In a recent article, published before the results of the Rochdale by-election were known, Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, the historian, set out to explain the lack of interest in current politics of which so many, including politicians themselves, have been complaining, and he finds that the reason lies in the fact that there is nothing left to reform, that the Parliament of 1945 did its work so well that there is a lack of those big issues which alone are able to maintain political interest. Immediately, of course, there were loud protestations that today is bristling with great issues both at home and abroad. The recent by-election, with its eighty per cent poll on an old register, shows that something can enter into politics, even today, which brings out hearers to meetings and votes to the polls. One notable thing about Mr. Taylor's article was the way in which he belittled the interest taken in British politics in the years 1900-1914. One critic suggested that the historian could hardly have been politically-conscious in those days.

I was then an adolescent living in an overseas dominion, but the interest even there in the issues of British politics of the day was very keen, and I would hesitate to believe that in this country there was no positive passion in the political life of those times. However, Rochdale has come as an assurance that there is no inevitable decay in British political life and that democracy need not necessarily perish for lack of appreciation of political issues.

Commentator.

Death of Dr. F. M. Eliot

We deeply regret to learn on going to press of the death of Dr. F. M. Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association, in New York.

THE INQUIRER

All letters and manuscripts for the Editor must reach the Office not later than Monday morning for publication the same week. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

Subscription Rates: £1 3s. 10d. per annum (post free).

Those having any difficulty in obtaining copies of the paper should communicate direct with the publishers.

Address: 35 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

TEL.: EUS. 7603 Editorial: EUS. 2462

IT OCCURRED TO ME

By Muriel Hilton

IN that charming play, "Lady Precious Stream", there is a scene where one of the characters mentions the time when the reading of poems is most pleasing. In this instance poems added enchantment when the snow was falling and wine was being taken at the same time—snow, wine and poems. A pleasure in the outside elements, a sense of personal well-being, and then poems.

I've often thought since seeing the play about those occasions on which poems are the crowning touch to a blending of pleasures that make for a blissful state of being. One incident I recall very vividly. Many years ago three friends and I were walking in the Surrey hills, and we rested after a long climb, enjoying the sun that had suddenly emerged from a cloud. We ate our lunch and then stretched out on the grass, happy and contented. One of the party sat up and gazed at the distant woods, and knowing that he was a member of a verse-speaking choir we asked him if he remembered any poems. Without any trace of self-consciousness he started that lovely poem of Walter de la Mare's:—

> Very old are the woods,
> And the buds that break
> Out of the briar's boughs
> When March winds wake,
> So old with their beauty are—
> Oh, no man knows
> Through what wild centuries
> Roves back the rose.

There was a deep silence after, and the occasion has never been forgotten. It was the poem that gave it its lasting quality.

I can think of many other occasions when there has been a feeling of harmony with the outer world, a sense of inner peace, the nearness of friends when poetry has been the crowning touch, but none more vivid than poems read in a service of worship. Here we have the outer world, the church itself which should mean a great deal, the inner poise of peace and quiet and the company of those who are bound to us in spirit. In such a blending poems can enhance the quality of the meeting and make the most vivid impact.

A FILM ON DOCTOR SCHWEITZER

By Beryl Lee

QUITE unobtrusively a film that should be of interest to readers of *The Inquirer* has arrived in London. No headlines, no hoardings announced in advance *The Story of Dr. Schweitzer* (at the Cinephone cinema, Oxford Street), the most serious and worthwhile film I have seen for a long time. It has not been well received: it has even had some curt, sour notices; the conversation of Dr. Schweitzer has been likened to the "chapter headings to a book of good deeds". And with these notices are long ones about films of the kind that are two-a-penny; any week of the year we may see them in any town that has two or three cinemas.

It is, of course, questionable whether it is wise to make a film of a great man while he is still alive, and we can see that this has directly affected the factual representation; strangely enough it has not been criticized so much on this score. It is also difficult to present the personality in all its dimensions, and no doubt a larger and better film will one day be made: a posthumous tribute to Albert Schweitzer. But at least this was made, not only with Schweitzer's approval, but also with his active interest in the work of filming it. Based on a biography by Gilbert Cesbron, it was partly filmed in the province of Gabon, where Lambaréné is situated.

At first, it may seem inadequate to have reconstructed his early life so briefly, and to have stopped at the end of his first period in Africa, when he was still only forty-two; but that was, after all, the significant period. The decision was made, action taken, and his reputation among the natives grew just as fast as the tom-toms could pass the news. It ends with his being taken into custody prior to his being interned and sent to Europe, and he says to the officer: "It is not me you are arresting; it is the malaria, the leper, and the yellow fever you are freeing". He never spoke truer words than at that moment—yet some of his *dicta* have been labelled pious texts in all levels of the Press.

What *is* rather disturbing is the introduction of "Mlle. Marie", as a young woman setting out to help him, and later refusing offers of marriage because of her devotion to the doctor and his work, whereas we know that Mrs. Schweitzer accompanied him and helped him throughout that first period. It was an awkward hurdle that was simply swept away, and that is one of the points for the score against the making of such a film. Some concessions had to be made, of course. Brainwork, "burning the candle at both ends", as Schweitzer has always been able to do, does not provide dramatic material. So the dramatic incidents (and there are many) had to be telescoped for the requirements of a film.

The part of Dr. Schweitzer is played by that fine French actor, Pierre Fresnay, and the whole film has been dubbed into English—usually an unsatisfactory process at its best—but I have never seen it manipulated better. Fresnay's performance is, to my mind, an inspired one, though people who have known Dr. Schweitzer will, no doubt, see flaws everywhere. The essential truths of his life, however, are there: the great humanitarian motive, his religious attitude to everything living, the inspiration he draws from—and gives to—music: and unifying all this, his prodigious labour which, in fact we know, is greater than any film could show.

One of the treats of this film is the participation, though unseen, of Marcel Dupré at the organ.

VIEWS, NEWS AND NOTES

By A. B. Downing

PASSING the Memorial Hall in Albert Square, Manchester, the other day, prompted me to wonder whether our denomination will be making any special arrangements to celebrate the Tercentenary of the Ejection of 1662. There are still large gilt letters on the Memorial Hall pointing out to passers-by that the Hall, now largely let off to various non-Unitarian offices and organizations, was built to commemorate that famous landmark in English religious history. I think it was Dr. John Relly Beard who, on the occasion of its opening, prophesied that Unitarianism was without a doubt the religion of the future! The modern Presbyterians and Congregationalists are, I know, already planning to celebrate the Tercentenary. From their arrangements I understand that we Unitarian dissenters have been excluded, whether deliberately or otherwise I do not know. Such an exclusion scarcely seems just, but there it is. I can readily imagine that they are perhaps not over-anxious to broadcast the fact that Unitarianism was one of the ultimate results of the Ejection.

The question is, what have our own denominational leaders in mind in connexion with the 1962 celebrations? I am told that a "1662 Committee" has been appointed and will meet later this year. Its members are the Rev. Roger Thomas, of Dr. Williams's Library (which will be used for source material by the other denominations besides our own), Principal F. Kenworthy of Manchester, the Rev. Lionel Short of Oxford, and the Rev. Gordon Bolam of Nottingham. I gather that it is hoped to publish a volume on the significance of 1662 and we can be certain that, with such a team, the whole episode of the famous Ejection will be put in proper perspective. At the same time, 1962 seems a good opportunity of putting our dissenting persuasion back upon the national map again. We have slipped off it sadly since the halcyon days of Relly Beard. We can but hope that guidance and help will be forthcoming from those who know most about the matter. We can surely rise to something more ambitious

than a slim volume of erudite essays, however judicious in tone and taste!

★

I see, from the "Christian World", that there are at least seven heresy-hunting hot-heads studying for the Congregational ministry at that much respected institution, the Lancashire Independent College. They protest in a letter that the Rev. Kenneth Cairns, minister of Walkden Congregational Church, is preaching liberal doctrine which they believe to be erroneous and that, therefore, he should be ejected from the Congregational Union and packed off among the Unitarians. Mr. Cairns is a well-known figure in the Union of Modern Free Churchmen, of which a few of our own ministers are members. Fortunately, I can report that reasonable-minded and genuine Congregationalists are just as much shocked as we are by such heresy-hunting proclivities in what claims to be a modern Christian denomination. If the young men were to have any success it would be a sad blow indeed—and only four years before we celebrate the Tercentenary of the Ejection of 1662! Fortunately, as a true Independent, the editor of the "Christian World" exposes the hollowness of their case. For that we can salute him.

★

The Committee of the Ministerial Fellowship met last week in Manchester. Its chairman this year is the Rev. Walter M. Long and what a wonderfully happy choice as president of the ministers' professional association he is proving—calm and kind and superbly combining dignity with despatch. I suppose he is so good in committee because of his long experience in local government in London, which surely must be pretty well unique among our ministers. He inspires genuine respect and it is a real pity that Unitarians in the North-West see only too little of him. Outwardly reserved and mild in manner, to see or hear him in action is to experience one of those truly happy discoveries about the wonderful range of sheer personality among our ministers, especially the older ones. And above all he is *efficient*! For that alone he deserves our compliments.

★

My reference to local government reminds me of that other side of public activity, the Bench. Up and down the country I suppose we must have quite a few Unitarian J.P.s One of the latest is Mrs. Josephine Bartlett, the wife of our minister in Stalybridge. Mrs. Bartlett is both youthful and charming, and must certainly be an adornment to the Bench at Stalybridge Magistrates' Court, where she sits. She was appointed last year and one gathers that her elevation was regarded as a well-deserved tribute not only to herself but to the liberal principles which our Unitarian friends in Stalybridge so effectively uphold.

Mrs. Bartlett is a product of Rotherham and Oxford and is the modern languages mistress at the Astley Grammar School for Girls. She has been very prominent in that Anglo-French organization known as Monde-Bilingue, which initiates a process of "twinning" between French and English towns; the French week at Harrogate, for example has achieved more than local fame. Stalybridge's own French twin is Armentières, near Lille, and one gathers that Mrs. Bartlett's French resources have been much in demand among her fellow-citizens. She deserves our compliments, for she is doing something that we Unitarians always genuinely admire. Public service being what it is, we do hope that she will not be over-worked.

★

(Note: This column, if I am not careful, might seem to draw too much inspiration from the North-West! I would, of course, like to guard against that. I know that many miles away from where I happen to circulate there are Unitarian people and places which deserve wider notice. I should like to refer to them. If there are any references you would like me to make, would you please let me know about them either through the Editor or direct to me at 16 Styal Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire.—A.B.D.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer", 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C. 1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

Views, News and Notes

SIR,—I am sorry to have to contradict Mr. Deakin. Whether ministers can travel in the U.S.A. at half-fare (by rail) is scarcely an interesting matter of controversy. The fact is, they can! As for the visa application form, there are thousands of honest and harmless Englishmen like myself and Principal Kenworthy who are required to list "all places and inclusive dates of residence since age 16, including exact street and number", and to list "all organizations of any type" with which we have been "affiliated in any manner". If that is not a formidable requirement, I don't know what is! When I pay my respects to the lady on the Statue of Liberty, I shall not feel over-enthusiastic in giving her the glad eye! My writer's cramp, after filling in her form, will just about enable me to throw up a wan salute!

Faced with the visa form, I only wish I were years younger and had lived a much less complicated, less interesting life!—Yours,

Wilmslow, Cheshire. *A. B. Downing.*

No Conscience Burdened

SIR,—As one who came to Unitarianism from Judaism, may I say that I entirely dissent from "Commentator's" plea, that our hymns and services should be altered? It seems to me one of the glories of our faith that some of the beauty of Anglican worship is retained, even though no one's conscience is burdened by having to repeat credal statements which he does not really believe.

Our hymns, too, combine (to my mind) great dignity with poetic feeling and sincerity. Which of them are too "Christo-centric"? Would "Commentator" discard a gem like "Long ago the lilies faded which to Jesus seemed so fair"?

Surely we can admire the vigour of our Canadian friends without following them into an American pattern!—Yours,

Birmingham. *Peter Flinn.*

The I.A.R.F.

SIR,—May I call your readers' attention to "International Sunday", which is being observed in our churches on the last Sunday in February to remember the work of the International Association for Religious Freedom? The Association consists of individual members as well as of the member-groups such as the General Assembly, and for the annual subscription of 10s. individuals can support and hear of its activities and of the liberal religious groups in many other countries of the world through the quarterly News Digest sent to each member.

As Individual Members Secretary for Great Britain, I can supply further information to inquirers who care to write to me at Harrison Parsonage, Atherton, Manchester, and should be glad to receive subscriptions from present and intending members. It is most convenient if cheques and postal orders are made out to me personally.—Yours,

Atherton, Manchester. *Kenneth Twiss.*

No "Retreat" This Year

SIR,—I have just returned from a three-day retreat at a friendly Retreat House that, knowing my unorthodox beliefs, is yet ready to welcome me.

I went very much in need of refreshment, mind, body, and spirit, and that refreshment was given me in full measure. It is difficult to get across to those who have not had the experience what such a time does for one. It is therefore with regret that I have to tell those interested that it has been found impossible to organize a Retreat for our own body this year. Those able and willing to act as conductors are none of them free to help on this occasion; they have already given wonderful service in the past seven years; it is no light burden for men and women actively at work in the ministry to find time to make three or six or nine addresses, moreover that can't be cut down or expanded from sermons; not to mention the further time and preparation required of a conductor.

I sincerely hope that we shall be able to hold our eighth Retreat in 1959; and if possible, at Unitarian College, Manchester.

Though I would never dream of doing anything but welcome the agnostic inquirer to our services, yet it remains my unshaken belief that only where there is a core of real prayer will any "cause" grow and prosper.—Yours,

Cwrtderwen. *Margaret R. Dickie.*

THE INQUIRER

YOUTH SUPPLEMENT

BY THE UNITARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEAGUE

JAMES DEAN

By Nicholas J. Teape

(*Minister of the Ipswich Unitarian Congregation.*)

AT 5.59 on the evening of September 30, 1955, a powerful racing car, driven by a young Hollywood actor, crashed head-on into another car at 70 m.p.h. near Salinas, in California. The name of the actor was James Dean. He was not then a very big name in the film world, although he had played important roles in three films: *East of Eden*, *Rebel Without A Cause* and *Giant*.

James Dean was killed. He was buried, and his burial-place is known. Even so, thousands of young people all over the world stubbornly refused to believe that he was dead. Thousands of letters poured into Hollywood seeking confirmation of this belief.

Who was this man who, in the space of one year, became a young people's "Christ-Myth"? The facts are commonplace enough. He was born at Marion, Indiana, on February 8, 1931, the son of a dental technician. His mother, who doted on him, died of cancer when he was eight years old. His father, unable to work and look after him at the same time, sent him to his sister and her husband on a small farm in Indiana. It seems that it took him a long time to get over the shock of his mother's death. The popular psychologists have endeavoured to make the most of this fact to try to account for his later "eccentricities". (People like to believe just now that adolescents would fit very well into the framework of our society if parents bestowed love more liberally on their offspring. This is a useful get-out for those who want to evade the real problem of adolescence.)

So we are asked to believe that the loss of mother-love can account for the unhappiness of James Dean. Be that as it may, he certainly grew up in the small-town environment, deeply sensitive, frustrated and unhappy. He developed a passion for speed and found great enjoyment in the hazards of motor-cycling and fast cars. He also took a great interest in the "free expression" school of acting which Marlon Brando typifies. But James Dean never imitated Brando or anyone else. He was deeply concerned, somewhere, somehow, to find himself. He soon discovered his ability to put over his own frustrations and inhibitions perfectly on the screen. For this reason he was chosen for an important part in the watered-down film version of John Steinbeck's novel, *East of Eden*. He really was the part; he had only to be himself. Anyone who has seen this film and the other two, *Rebel Without A Cause* and *Giant*, will realize at once the power and attraction of James Dean. He portrays brilliantly the tragic predicament of millions of youthful victims of our so-called civilization.

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Had Dean gone on living he might have been "shaped and made unaware", as is the fate of most rebels in our society. He might even have been seduced into abandoning his sincerity and becoming the leader, the hero, of his young worshippers. That is what usually happens to such people. Instead of communicating the spirit to their admirers, the admirers surrender themselves utterly to the leader. Some leaders think they can escape this fate by death, but that is an illusion. Jesus said: "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away the spirit will not come to you". Little did he realize the ingenuity of an emotionally sick people to frustrate his purpose. If they could not crown him on earth they would crown him in heaven. So it is too with James Dean's death. He is dead and yet he is not dead. In other words, the individual James Dean has passed from the world of reality into the world of mystical phantasy. The fact that he was killed on September 30, 1955, and buried on October 8, and that the proofs of these facts can be produced, mean nothing to those who will to believe that he is alive.

One modern journalist writing on Dean says that Dean has, for present-day teenagers, become a substitute for Christ. That is true enough as far as it goes. But is it not equally true to say that Christ is a substitute for something else? Since our society will not let people, especially young people, be what they are, the frustrated emotions must find an outlet somehow. Inward emotional sterility creates an aching void which people try to fill with all kinds of spurious entities. People who are emotionally impotent in their private lives, in their personal, sexual, and social relations, must have heroes and ideal figures to worship. The dead serve this purpose best, perfection after all is death, and the craving for it a death-wish.

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There are, in my opinion, far too many churches and religious organizations, the members of which think they can best serve youth by holding up to them some ideal model or pattern. If youth would only take to Christ in the way they take to James Dean, all would be well, they think. This is fatal. As A. S. Neill once said: "We have all been disciples of someone, but if we remain only disciples we do not get very far. Every man should pray that he has no disciples. Most of Freud's disciples are dull, plodding people. D. H. Lawrence's disciples are squabbling among themselves, for each thinks he or she knows the truth about the master. And when we see what the disciples of Jesus have made of his message, we must realize that discipleship is very, very dangerous". So it is with the disciples of James Dean. So it is with so many who profess and call themselves Christians. They are identifying themselves with a vital person, and by making him perfect and unique, they hope to compensate for their own fears, frustrations and insufficiencies.

That, as I see it, is the eternal problem: to try to get people to live from the centre outwards, instead of putting the centre somewhere else—away, outside, above them. The answer is not in Christology. It is in us.

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It is often said that the hope of the future lies with the young people, but that hope is dimmed by the fact that we live in a society where "the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children". We are ruled by the old and the dead. There is a deep-seated malice against the adolescent in our society which manifests itself in all kinds of ways. We are not happy until he is knocked into shape and forms a cog in the social machine. We load him with material benefits and complain that he is ungrateful for our generosity. One thing we will not do—we will not let him be himself. Often the only protest he knows is the protest of the teddy boy and the scamp. That is surely better than nothing, and we would certainly profit from trying to understand it before we condemn it. As Theodore Dreiser once said: "One of the mollifying recourses in life is, to fix one's eye on youth and note what it desires. Plainly it is an expression of the thing that creates it, the chemic mood of the biologic forces, for plainly it is closer to that which creates it. . . . In the main youth blazes with neo-equational fires and it best represents that which makes it, the chemic impulses below or behind life. Is youth wrong? Then so is the life impulse, for it builds youth frothily to its needs yearly, daily".

Nietzsche knew well enough what was wrong with our civilization when he said that we have "a millennial heritage of conscience-vivisection and cruelty to the animals in ourselves". The tragedy of James Dean and his disciples is the tragedy of all of us.

THE CALENDAR OF THE CHURCHES

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1958

Abergavenny, Unitarian Church, Monnow Street, 11 and 6, Supply
Abertillery, New Street Meeting House, 11, Mr. T. Dilwyn Nicholas
Aldeburgh, Unitarian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Alexander W. Wallace
Altrincham, Unitarian Church, Stamford Road, 11.15 and 6, Rev. S. Ola Astley, Unitarian Church, Manchester Road, 6.30, Mr. W. L. Hanson
Bath, Trinity Street Church, Unitarian, 6.30, Rev. S. Simmons
Belfast, All Souls' Memorial Assembly, 11.30 and 7, Dr. A. L. Agnew
Belfast, First Church, Rosemary Street, 11.30 and 7, Dr. H. J. McLachlan
Bewdley Church (by permission), Unitarian Church, 11, Mr. G. E. Prentice
Bexhill Church, High Street, 11, Rev. J. Maurice Hall
Birkenhead, Unitarian Church, Whetstone Lane, 6.30 (March 2), Mr. R. E. Lloyd
Birmingham, Church of Messiah, Broad Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Geoffrey Bertagnell
Birmingham, Church of Christ, and Hope Street Mission, Small Heath, 6.30, Rev. Bernard Mellor
Blackburn, Church House, Clayton Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Mr. R. A. Wipp
Blackpool, Church House, Lytham Road, 11 and 6.30, Supply
Bolton, Church House, 2.15, Sunday School, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. E. Sidwell Pope
Bolton, Park Church, Manor Road, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. Arthur J. Lamb
Bootle (Merseyside), Unitarian Church, Stanley Lane, 6.30, Rev. Sidney Hall
Bowdon (Cheshire), Unitarian Church, Green Hill Road, 11, Rev. Lawrence Redfern
Bradford, Unitarian Church, Manningham Lane, 11, Mr. Peter Hall
Bradford, Town Hall Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Frank A. Billcliffe
Bridgwater, Chapel Church, Unitarian, Dampier Street, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Supply
Bridport, Unitarian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. G. Raymond Perry
Brighton, Dorset Church (Unitarian), New Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. James Rowland
Bristol, Lewin's Mead Meeting, 6.30, Rev. A. M. Boyden
Bristol, Oakfield Road, 11, Rev. A. M. Boulton, 6.30, Mr. R. L. Nicholson
Bristol, Unitarian Church, Frenchay Street, 3, Rev. L. Hallworth
Bury, Bank Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. F. M. Bray
Bury, Unitarian Church, Hammond Road, 11 and 6, Rev. H. Stewart Carter
Cambridge, Free Christian Church, 6.30, Rev. S. E. Bowyer
Cardiff, The Church of the Great Commission, Richmond Hill, 3, Rev. Wyn Hayes
Cardiff, Unitarian Church, Royal Walk, 11, Study Service, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. J. M. Grant
Chesham, Meeting House?), Chapel, Trigby Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. L. A. Gribble
Chesham, Meeting House, Church, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Ernest Short
Chesterton, Church, Arbury Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Kenneth Twiss
Chichester, Free Christian Church, South Street, 6.30, Supply
Chorley, Free Christian Church, Stonehouse Street, 11 and 6.30, Mrs. M. S. Dickie
Chorley, Unitarian Church, Wigan Road, 11, Rev. J. P. Cobbe (also 6.30 Saturday, 8 Mar. at 6.30)
1st Sunday in the month)
Derby, Willow Row Church, 11, Children's Chapel, 6.30, Rev. Peter Cotton
Derby, Priory Street Unitarian Church, 6.30, Supply
Dewsbury, Old Meeting House, 10.45, Mr. S. E. Hirst
Dorchester, Free Christian Church, Hall Green, 11 and 6.30, Rev. O. W. Pickering
Dorchester, Prince Charles Church, Whitfield Road, 11, Rev. J. P. Cobbe (also 6.30 Saturday, 8 Mar. at 6.30)
Dorking, Ashcombe Road, Unitarian Church, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Rev. Philip C. Hobbs
Dublin, Stephen's Green, Hall, 11.30 and 7.30, Rev. E. Savage Hicks
Dudley, Old Meeting House, Wolverhampton Street, 11, Rev. Ronald Pearson (1st and 3rd Sundays, 6.30, Mr. J. H. Hirst)
Dunmurry, Old Congregational Church, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. S. P. Wannamaker
Dunstable, Old Chapel, 10 Chapel Street, 11, Rev. A. E. Pitts
Edinburgh, St. Mary's Church, Castle Terrace, 11 and 6.30, Rev. W. B. Tennent
Edinburgh, Gospel Church, Leith Street, 6.30, Rev. Dr. F. D. Maven-Eason
Elgin, Hope Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. Hubert Nunn
Ely, Unitarian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Anne Cotgrave
Gateshead, St. Mary's Street, Unitarian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Anne Cotgrave
Gateshead, Sheriff Hill Church, 11.15, Rev. E. Norris Cook
Glasgow, Hope Street Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. S. Duncanson
Glasgow, Main Street Church, Cambuslang, 6.30, Rev. A. S. Duncanson
Gloucester, Barton Street Church, 10.45, Rev. J. E. Timmins, 6.30, Mr. W. Andrew Davies
Gosforth, Free Christian Church, Regent Centre, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Dennison Hickman
Greenock, Wellington Church, 11 and 6, Supply
Grimsby, Heneage Street, 6.30, Rev. Maurice Hall
Halifax, Ovenden Road Church, 6.30, Rev. J. D. Tinsley
Hastings, Priory Street Church, Unitarian Church, 6.30, Rev. Stanley Pope
Hull, Park Street Church, Unitarian Church, 6.30, Mr. T. Worboys
Ipswich, Stoke Park Unitarian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Bishop W. Rice
Kendal, Stramongate Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Aubrey Smith
Kidderminster, Bewdley Road Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Alfred Gregory
Lancaster, St. George's Church, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. R. L. Gillard
Leeds, Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. C. V. Watson
Leicester, Belgrave Road, St. Saviour Church, 6.30, Mr. C. V. Watson
Leicester, The Great Meeting, Unitarian, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Lawrence Redfern
Leicester, Memorial Hall, J. E. Lyons Memorial, Clarendon Park Road, 11, —
Lewes, Westgate Chapel, 11, Rev. F. Hankinson
Lincoln, High Street, Unitarian Church, 6.30, Rev. H. W. Enwright
Liverpool, Bethesda Chapel of Ease, 11, and 6.30, Dr. F. H. Threlfall
Liverpool, Brunswick Road Free Church, 11, Supply
Liverpool, Brunswick Memorial Hall, 11 and 6.30, Supply
Liverpool, Gateacre Church, 11, Rev. Stanley E. Dakin
Liverpool, Hardman Street, Church, 11, Sunday School, 6.30, Dr. S. J. Eddisbury
Liverpool, Hope Street, 6.30, Rev. C. A. Piepe
Liverpool, Ullet Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. C. Hirstpeter
Liverpool, Mill Street, Unitarian Church, 6, Rev. Maurice Lewis
Liverpool, Old Swan, Edgeware Road, 6, Rev. Maurice Lewis
Liverpool, Renshaw Street and Stanley Road Mission Chapel, 6.30, Rev. F. Hankinson
Liverpool, Stanley Hall Road, 11, Rev. E. O. Lee
Liverpool, Upper Parliament Street, Nursing Hall Open, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Charles Hoyle
Liverpool, Upper Lane, Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. Stanley E. Dakin
Liverpool, Welsh Church, Church of Princes, 11, and 6.30, Dr. T. R. Thomas
Liverpool, Wavertree Free Church, 11, Supply
Liverpool, Wavertree Methodist Church, 6.30, Rev. W. G. Symonds
Liverpool, Welsh Presbyterian Church, Nursing Hall Open, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Charles Hoyle
Liverpool, Upper Chapel

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NEWS REVIEW

Pulpits Vacant

The following pulpits are at present vacant and any minister desiring to have information concerning them should write direct to the Secretary of the General Assembly and *not* to the church concerned.

Banbury; Blackpool: North and South Shore; Bridgwater and Taunton; Bolton: Halliwell Road and Walmsley; Denton, Hale and Hinckley, Kingswood; London: Mansford Street; Lydgate and Wakefield; Newchurch; Pudsey; Shrewsbury; Scarborough and Whitby; Walsall and West Bromwich; Scotland: Edinburgh, Dundee; Wales: Cilfau Aeron and Rhydygwin, Aberdare, Capel-y-Groes and Cribyn; Ireland: Cork.

Padiham: At the annual congregational meeting, Miss Alice Smith was appointed President of the Chapel for twelve months. She is a good worker for the cause, and for many years has been interested in Chapel and Sunday School work. She succeeds Mr. T. W. Waddington, who has retired because of ill health, and now holds the position of Honorary Vice-President. The work and service Mr. Waddington has given to the Unitarian movement was put on record. The Secretary, Miss V. Cunliffe, and the Treasurer, Mr. G. Waddington, were reappointed.

Sheffield District Women's League held their annual meetings at Upper Chapel, Sheffield, on Wednesday, February 12, 1958. Following the Executive Meeting, the General Business Meeting was presided over by the President, Mrs. E. D. Davies. Reports from officers and delegates of the District League and from nine of twelve branches were heard with interest and gratitude, revealing, as always, the significant and invaluable work done by the Women's League. Mrs. Whitby's report on two addresses heard at meetings of the Standing Conference, one on the question of "Loneliness", the other on "Mothers Out at Work and its Effect on Their Children", were thought-provoking. Mrs. Whitby generously undertook to visit and speak further on these reports to any branches who so desired. Mrs. Shaw, the Central Committee representative, having served for three years, Mrs. E. D. Davies was elected to succeed her. Mrs. Whitaker also comes to the end of her three years as member of the Central Committee. Mrs. G. W. Parkinson agreed to accept nomination for election this year. Mrs. Hutchinson is to be the delegate at the annual meeting in London. The Central Committee donations to Margaret Barr, Unitarian College, and Hucklow Holiday Homes were voted as last year. At 4.45 p.m. there was tea in Channing Hall. At 6 p.m. there was a service in the Chapel. In opening the service, Mrs. Whitehouse, of Dukinfield, spoke of the sudden death of Mrs. Wells, of Fulwood, expressing our sympathy with those bereaved.

A.S.

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Holidays Abroad
REAL UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP can be enjoyed and contacts made with kindred spirits from many countries if you join us: French Riviera (June 16-27), Norway (July 12-24), Denmark-Sweden (August 12-22), Switzerland (August 18-29). Lone travellers welcome. Nothing strenuous. Reduced fares. Excellent hotels. Rev. Parkinson, 4 Balmoral Road, Doncaster (telephone 4775).

Miscellaneous
"UNSEARCHABLE RICHES", the ideal magazine for the serious Bible Student, 7s. per annum. "THE CONCORDANT VERSION", the most accurate translation extant. Write: H. Jones, 10 Abbey Road, Mansfield, Notts.

"AS OTHERS SEE US——"

(From: "Rufus Isaacs, First Marquess of Reading", by his son, the Second Marquess of Reading.)

"THOUGH his mother's determination to uproot the old orthodoxy had been as welcome to Rufus as to his brothers and sisters, he now found himself confronted by the realization that she had failed to plant anything in its place and that, so far as the religious side of life was concerned, desolation reigned.

"His problem was no easy one. He could not go back to the strict formalism of his childhood, not merely because he had already been detached from it for so many years but chiefly because he was fundamentally out of sympathy with anything but an irreducible minimum of religious rite, holding that a multitude of observances served to obscure rather than to illumine faith. The more liberalized forms of Judaism recently introduced seemed to him only an unsatisfying compromise. Christianity, deeply though he respected it, was not the answer to his quest. It was his own view that, if he had been able as a young man to start from the beginning, free from all loyalties and attachments inherited or acquired, he would have found his goal in Unitarianism. Austerity in religion had no terrors for him and luxury, either of emotion or display, no appeal.

"Though he never severed connection with Judaism and left in his will instructions that at his funeral there was to be 'a simple Jewish service', he never made any pretence of observing even the most solemn occasions of the Jewish year, and never entered a synagogue save for a wedding or memorial service. Yet he was far from either atheist or agnostic: he clung to the simple and central article of his faith, the belief in One God. . . ."

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Printed by Wightmans and Sons Ltd., Queen Road, Southend-on-Sea and Published by The Inquirer Publishing Co. Ltd., at the Temporary Office, 14 Gordon Square, W.C.1.—Saturday (Publishing Date) Thursday, February 27, 1958